FEB 8

DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

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RATIONING ENDS

Pensions, Low Wages Raised in Sweeping Reform

Far-reaching wage and price revisions affecting every man, woman and child in the German Democratic Republic went into effect at the end of May.

On May 28th the Parliament of the German Democratic Republic passed special legislation ending rationing, and abolishing the double price system of very cheap "on-the-ration" food and more expensive "off-the-ration" food which has been in force for the past ten years.

The introduction of unified food prices was accompanied by considerable wage increases for low income groups, cost-of-living allowances for most workers, and increased pensions.

The aim of the very complicated adjustments to wages and prices was to see to it that the low-income groups should not suffer in any way from the abolition of rationing, and the increases in the price of meat, fats and sugar which accompany the ending of rationing.

Here are some of the main details of the new legislation, which went into force immediately:

1. **Ration cards abolished.** Until now, meat, fats and sugar were available on-the-ration in the German Democratic Republic at very low prices, generally corresponding to the pre-war level. The average ration was approximately equivalent to the ration in Britain before the abolition of rationing there in 1954. At the same time all these goods were available off-the-ration at higher prices. The abolition of ration cards has been accompanied by the fixing of new prices for meat, fats and sugar, approximately halfway between the old "ration" prices and the old "free" prices.

2. **Prices unchanged for basic foods, services.** The low basic prices for bread and potatoes, maintained by subsidy, will continue. Low rates for electricity, gas, water, low fares and rents will not be altered. The prices for these goods and services lie well below the ruling rates in West Germany.

3. **Price reductions.** The prices for a number of foodstuffs such as cocoa, rice, cake, condiments

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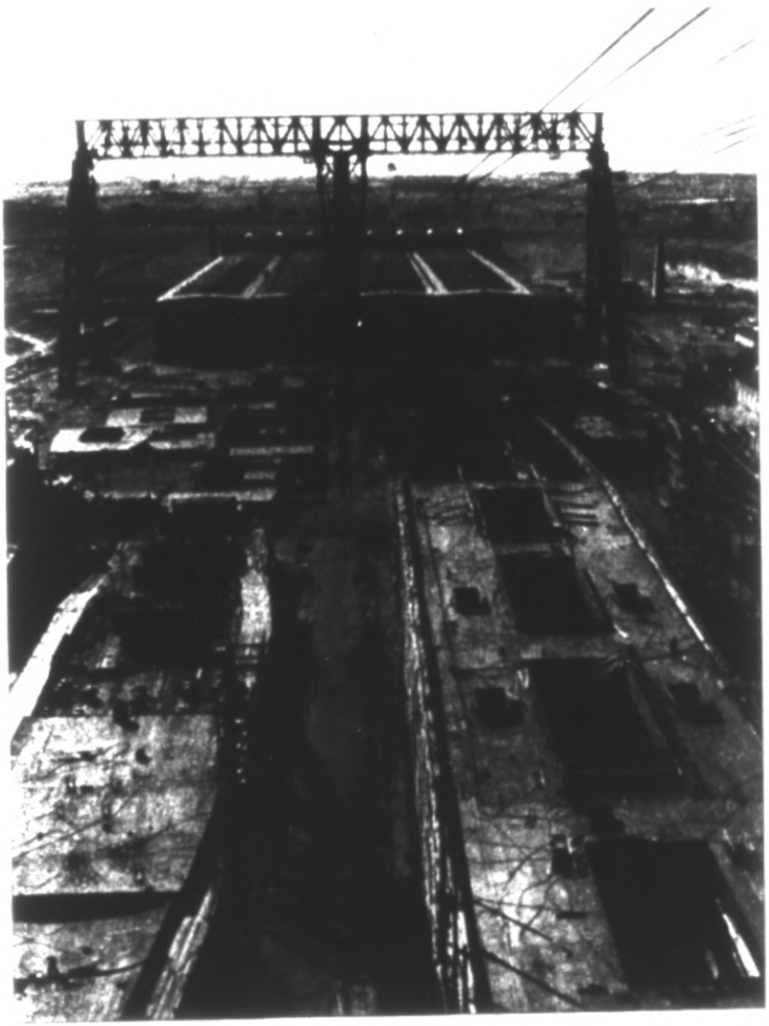

Ten-thousand Tonners on the slips at Warnow Shipyards.
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(cont from front page)

RATIONING ENDS

etc have been slashed. Prices for many consumer goods such as bedding, Perlon stockings, children's clothing, toys and perambulators have been cut. Lower prices have been fixed for certain services such as lady's hairdressing, and prices for restaurant meals have been cut between 10% and 30%.

4. **Hard drink up.** Spirits prices have been increased by an average of 20%. Beer prices are unchanged.

5. **Cost of living allowances.** Graduated tax-free cost of living allowances have been granted to all workers earning up to 800 marks monthly, top earnings for a skilled worker.

6. **Higher wages.** All workers earning less than 380 marks, roughly the average industrial wage, will receive considerable wage increases, ranging from about 15% for the lowest groups to smaller sums for the higher groups. Special measures will be taken in the immediate future to increase basic wages in such industries as mining, the textile industry, the health services.

7. **Children's allowances.** A children's allowance of 20 marks monthly will be paid to all workers and to peasants on socialised farms. A smaller children's allowance will be paid to craftsmen, shopkeepers, and most other categories. Special increased motherhood grants will be made, increasing to 1000 marks for the fifth child in the family.

8. **Pensions, stipends.** Old age pensions and disability pensions will be increased by 9 marks monthly. Student's stipends will be increased by 10 marks monthly.

NINETEEN YEARS

By the Editor

For the first time for almost nineteen years, East Germans could go shopping on May 29th this year without their ration cards: the last remnants of the war and post-war food rationing system had been abolished.

These nineteen years have been a period of enormous changes and ups-and-downs for the ordinary man and woman in the street, but one thing has remained unchanged in appearance throughout: the ration card.

The nazi authorities introduced food rationing on August 27th 1939, four days before the attack on Poland. In the early years of Hitler's war of aggression, rations were ample: looted supplies from the Ukraine and other areas were brought into Germany to keep rations there the best in Europe, while the conquered nations were starving.

After 1942, when the war began to turn against Hitler, the rations were gradually cut, and after the nazi collapse in 1945 ration cards only provided the very barest subsistence level, and sometimes not even that.

In the bleak years from 1945 to 1948 the ration card was an absolute necessity for any German who wished to survive. Little or no food of any sort was available off the ration.

With the partitioning of Germany in June 1948 through the introduction of the unilateral currency reform in the western zones, developments of the food situation in the two halves of Germany took different courses. In West Germany, massive American aid (with plenty of strings attached) led to a rapid improvement in the food situation, and food rationing was finally abolished there in January 1950. Controls were removed, subsidies were cancelled, and food prices went rapidly upwards, a development which has continued ever since.

In East Germany, a different policy was pursued. First step was the introduction of "free shops" late in 1948. These shops, which at first took the form of a sort of "legalised black market", provided off-the-ration foodstuffs at prices which were often many times as high as the controlled prices. Basic requirements were still provided for all consumers "on-the-ration" at very low prices, generally corresponding to the pre-war price levels.

As East Germany's recovery continued, more and more products were taken off the ration, and simultaneously the inflated prices for goods in the "free shops" were progressively reduced. For the past few years, the only goods rationed have been meat, fats and sugar.

In the past few years, food rationing has been more of a nuisance than a burden to East Germans: ration cards provided a basic quantity of key foodstuffs at very low prices, and an unlimited quantity of the same foodstuffs have been available at higher prices to anyone willing to pay the price.

For many months now, a special government commission has been at work on the abolition of rationing, and the abolition of the dual price system which rationing entailed. The main problem facing the commission was not that of providing sufficient food supplies: the food was there, which is convincingly shown by the fact that per capita consumption of butter, meat and sugar, for instance, was well up to usual Western European standards, and exceeded them in some items. The main problem was to end the double price standard without imposing any burden on the less well-to-do sections of the population, such as unskilled workers, old age pensioners and so on.

The work of the specialists has now ended, and ration cards have vanished.

Closer Cooperation Between Socialist Countries

The socialist countries in Europe will greatly increase their economic cooperation in the coming years, it was officially announced in Moscow on May 24th, at the end of a conference of the leaders of the Communist and Workers' Parties of these countries.

The German Democratic Republic was represented at the conference by Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, and other leading party members.

WARSAW PACT POWERS SUPPORT ATOM-FREE ZONE, CONFEDERATION

Full support for the plan for an atom-free Zone in Central Europe including both German states was expressed by the Warsaw Pact powers at a conference in Moscow on May 24th. The Warsaw Pact powers, all the socialist states of Europe with the exception of Yugoslavia, also expressed their support for the plan for a confederation of the two existing German states put forward recently by the Government of the German Democratic Republic. Main result of the meeting of the Warsaw Pact powers was the proposal that a non-aggression pact should be signed between the Warsaw Pact member states and the NATO states.

Addressing the conference, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl of the German Democratic Republic gave details of the increasing threat of West German militarism. He said:

"In 1957 the West German Wehrmacht was reinforced by 80%, and this rapid development is continuing. At present the Wehrmacht has a strength of nearly 200,000, and by the end of this year nine divisions will have been constituted.

"NATO circles have made misleading statements about the strength of the West German army: it must be made plain that by 1961 the West German army will have 16 divisions, consisting of six grenadier divisions, six tank divisions, two mountain divisions, and two airborne divisions. Its total strength will then be more than 500,000 men.

"I have not time to give full details of the West German air and naval forces. We in the German Democratic Republic are endeavouring to make the Baltic a sea of peace, but the West German Government is concentrating naval forces there and extending bases in Schleswig Holstein with the aim of blocking the exits from the Baltic and launching aggressive operations against the socialist states in the Baltic area.

"In 1957 there was increased activity in building up so-called territorial military organisations in the West German Republic. These formations are troops ready for action which are not subordinate to NATO, and which could be used by the West German Government against the native population or for aggressive acts against other states.

"When we consider this forced and all-round policy of armament in West Germany then we realise fully the danger implied in the fact that the West German militarists are now being given atomic and rocket weapons. It must also be remembered that several hundred former Hitlerite officers are already working in the NATO Supreme Command, and that they are winning ever greater influence there. In addition the Council of the Western European Union approved on May 9th the production of certain classes of rockets in West Germany, and thereby officially cancelled the limitations laid down in the Paris Agreements of 1954.

"In the course of the present redeployment of NATO troops in West Germany the West German units of the NATO army are being moved forward into positions along the state frontier of the German Democratic Republic. They are intended to play the role of the spearhead in aggressive operations.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic can naturally not close its eyes to the progress of re-armament in West Germany. Although we are faced with this development, we for our part have given proof of our earnest wish for a relaxation of tension by reducing the strength of our People's Army in 1956 by 30,000 men, bringing its strength down to 90,000. Since then we have not increased the strength of our People's Army. Despite the feverish programme of re-armament in West Germany the Government of the German Democratic Republic has not considered increasing the numerical strength of its armed forces."

Soviet Prime Minister N. S. Khrushchov, addressing the conference, also dealt at some length with the re-armament of West Germany. He said:

"The atomic armament of the West German Federal Republic, the ruling circles of which make no secret of the fact that they do not agree with the present frontiers in Europe, could have results even more serious than can be foreseen by some of the NATO powers. In any case it will inevitably lead to a dangerous arms race amongst the European states . . . The equipment of the West German army with atomic and rocket weapons, and the establishment of foreign atom-bases in West Germany is creating a situation in Europe similar in many ways to the situation in the period when Hitlerite Germany began to make its preparations for the Second World War.

"The equipment of West Germany with atomic weapons will not only deepen the division of Germany, but will also block the one remaining path for re-establishing German unity: the path of an agreement between the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic.

"The present policy of the United States and the other NATO states must force the Warsaw Pact states to draw their own conclusions. They would be very unwilling to take such a step, but the power of circumstances would force them to reconsider the question of stationing rocket weapons in the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

"This would mean that the rocket bases on both sides would be brought nearer to each other, which would inevitably lead to an increase in the war danger . . . We can only hope that the controllers of NATO will prove sensible, and that they will not force the Warsaw Pact states to take counter-measures in the stationing of rockets."

Speidel Special

The next issue of GERMAN REPORT will be a profusely illustrated "Speidel Special" giving full details of the infamous career of General Hans Speidel, the former nazi general who now commands the NATO Ground Forces in Central Europe.

We are making a particularly large print of this special issue, and we shall be glad to send bundles of complimentary copies for distribution to organisations and individuals in Britain and other NATO countries.

Orders should be sent immediately to

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Please do not order more copies than can be usefully distributed.

Socialist Congress Says "No" To Nuclear Weapons

The bi-annual congress of the West German Social Democratic Party, held in Stuttgart from May 18th to 23rd, was marked by very strong opposition to the arming of the new West German Wehrmacht with nuclear weapons.

The delegates to the Congress unanimously approved a resolution calling for a fight against nuclear weapons by all constitutional means, both inside and outside Parliament.

In other resolutions the delegates came out strongly for an atom-free zone in Central Europe, and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from this zone. For the first time, a majority of Congress delegates expressed their approval of direct contacts between the West German Government and the Government of the German Democratic Republic.

An indication of a generally progressive trend in Social Democratic policy was given by the fact that Herbert Wehner, a left-winger sometimes described as "West Germany's Nye Bevan" was elected as Deputy Chairman of the Party for the first time. Erich Ollenhauer was re-elected chairman.

In an attempt to win middle-class votes at the next West German election, the Party Congress passed a very vaguely worded resolution on its economic aims disavowing any intention of carrying out large-scale nationalisation of industry. Party economic expert Dr. Deist, proposing this resolution, stated: "For our party the abolition of private property in the means of production can no longer be the central point of our economic programme."

This new theory met considerable opposition from the floor of the Congress. Delegate Heinz Kluncker from Stuttgart declared, for instance: "Apparently the workers are no longer considered as the main force of the Social Democratic Party. When you read this resolution you are forced to the conclusion that the Social Democratic Party has become a party of carpet-peddlars and corner grocers."

Here are some of the main points from more important resolutions passed by the Social Democratic Congress:

"The Party Congress condemns the decision of the Federal Parliament to equip the Federal Army with atomic weapons. The inclusion of the Federal Republic in the atomic arms race endangers the security of the German people and wrecks the prospects for a peaceful reunification of Germany.

"The Party Congress approves the policy of the Party Board, and calls on the leading bodies of Social Democracy to continue, by all constitutional means, the fight against this decision both inside and outside Parliament.

"The Party Congress thanks those Social Democrats in the provinces and municipalities who have taken the initiative in starting referendums against atomic armament... and condemns the action taken by the Federal Government to ban referendums in the Provinces.

"Social Democrats are ready to cooperate with all political forces in the Federal Republic who are ready to make a constructive contribution to disarmament and the relaxation of tension, and to preparations for the reunification of Germany."

* * *

"The division of Germany is threatening to become a final partitioning. The Four Powers have given their own military-strategic planning in the East-West conflict the priority over their pledge to restore the unity of Germany. Divided Germany has become a pawn and a deployment field for the Powers. The Government of the Federal Republic has aided this development by giving the integration of the Federal Republic in NATO the priority over real action aimed at achieving reunification... The continued integration of the Federal Republic in NATO, and the participation of the Federal Republic in the atom arms race will isolate the communist-dominated part of Germany more and more from the rest of Germany...

"Conditions favourable to the achievement of an All-European Security Order could be attained by the following steps:

1. The inclusion of the two parts of Germany in an atom-free zone.

2. The withdrawal step-by-step of the foreign troops from Germany and from its eastern neighbours.

3. The final evacuation of foreign troops from the whole of the atom-free zone in Central Europe, and the establishment and control of the maximum figures for the home troops stationed in the atom-free zone...

"This would provide a framework within which the different parts of Germany could come together.

"The Social Democratic Party welcomes the efforts made in this direction by the British Labour Party and the T. U. C....

"The German people must induce the Four Powers to open the road for the reunification of Germany in freedom.

"The following steps must be taken:

1. Measures must be taken to link the two parts of Germany together, to strengthen the economic, social-political and cultural ties, and to prevent the development in the opposite direction.

2. Measures must be taken to overcome the cold war and the ideological hate propaganda inside Germany.

3. Measures must be taken to combine steps by the Four Powers and the two parts of Germany which will lead, in stages if necessary, to reunification.

"If, for these ends, it should be necessary to get into contact with the present authorities in the Soviet occupied zone (German Democratic Republic, ed.), then the Federal Government, which is responsible for the present situation, must take those steps necessary which will lead to internal relaxation of tension.

"The Social Democratic Party renews its call for the creation of normal diplomatic relations with the states of eastern Europe and the Chinese People's Republic."

Court Bans Bomb Ballot

The West German Constitutional Court issued an interim injunction on May 27th banning a referendum on the atom bomb in Hamburg district. The referendum, officially sponsored by the Hamburg Provincial Parliament, was scheduled to be held on June 8th. The Hamburg authorities announced that they would comply with the court ban, and postpone the referendum.

The Constitutional Court announced that it had issued the interim injunction because a referendum at this stage "might confuse the public". No such referendum could be held until the Constitutional Court has given a definitive ruling as to whether such a referendum is permissible under the West German Constitution.

E. GERMAN SHIPBUILDING (III)

By Commander E. P. Young R. N. Retd.

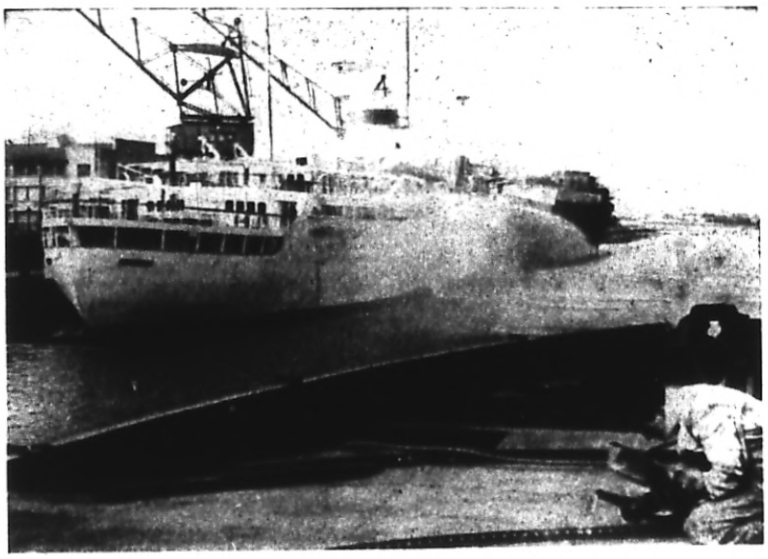
Going on from Potsdam to the Baltic, I was covering old ground, for I had visited most of the shipyards there in the spring of 1955. I was prepared, on the basis of my previous experience and of information received since then, to find many changes for the better; but what I found when I got there amazed me. Shipyards which had been doing some shipbuilding and a great deal of repair work three years ago were now building ships on a scale which makes them count for something in the world; and their capacity and output are scheduled to expand still further.

Even the old nationally owned Neptune shipyards at Rostock which, like many of the older shipyards in Britain, is too much built-round for expansion such as modern shipbuilding practice would prescribe, has found it possible to speed up and increase its output by improved organisation. It is still building the 4,300-ton deadweight freighters for which it has a good market abroad, but has thought of a good way to reduce their time of building.

Behind each ship building, on the same slip, the middle part of the next one (which involves more work than the end parts) is assembled simultaneously; so that as each ship is launched the middle part of her successor is slid into position for the bow and stern parts to be built onto it. The slip is thus cleared — ie., by the launch of a ship — in a maximum of 70 days, which may be reduced to 60 if the weather is kind; it is expected to reduce this time still further, to 54 days.

Other building there included a splendid train-ferry, for service between Germany and Sweden, which will be completed in 1959, and a series of 1,500-ton deadweight shelter-decked freighters destined — it is interesting to note — for West Germany.

The other major improvement which I noticed was in relation to the workers' housing, the previous shortcomings of which, though understandable in view of the heavy war damage suffered by Rostock, were less than compensated for by the excellence of the shipyard's club. Joint action by the shipyard and the municipal authorities have now provided satisfactory housing — somewhat too far, perhaps, from the shipyard — at the usual low rentals.



East Germany's first sea-going passenger ship nears completion in the Warnow Shipyards

While at Rostock, I was able to have a look round a new factory which is an object lesson to Britain and several other western countries. When I was in the German Democratic Republic three years ago, it was eager to buy large ship's Diesel engines for the ships then being laid down. Owing partly to "strategic" restrictions of East-West trade, and partly to the absence of a trade agreement, which would have facilitated payment, these were not procurable from the western manufacturers who would have liked to secure the contract.

So the German Democratic Republic is now making these for itself, at the nationally owned Diesel Motor Works in Rostock, a converted railway repair works, which I visited, at the brand-new nationally owned Halberstadt engine-building works, whose even larger Diesels were on show at the Leipzig Fair, and elsewhere. It will not be long, moreover, before the products of this new industry will appear on the world market, and we shall thus have deliberately turned a potential good customer for our Diesels into a competitor!

The other two shipyards which I visited, the nationally owned Warnow Shipyards at Warnemuende and the nationally owned Mathias Thesen Shipyards at Wismar, have been built up literally from nothing since 1946. Today they employ 9,000 and 7,000 workers respectively and are turning out large ocean-going ships fast. They are as modern as modern can be, as regards both equipment and methods, and the former boasts the largest shipbuilding shed in Europe, with floorspace of over 215,000 square feet, permitting extensive fabrication.

When I went there three years ago, the Warnow Shipyard had just started work on its first 10,000-ton deadweight freighter, for the China trade. While I was there this year the fourth of these, MS Dukla, was being handed over to Czechoslovakia, and two more were almost completed for service in the new merchant navy of the German Democratic Republic.

Others were in various stages of construction — they are being completed in about nine and a half months, which it is expected soon to reduce to seven and a half — that is, an output of four a year — and also the first ships of a series of 7,000-ton deadweight shallow-draught coal and ore-carriers for the USSR, which are to be turned out at a rate of five a year.

These and others come in the programme for the current 2nd Five Year Plan ending in 1960, after which — during the 3rd Plan — the Warnow shipyard will really get into its stride on a programme of 3 ships of 7,000 tons, 10 of 10,000 tons, 20 of 13,000 tons and 7 of 15,000 tons. This amazing advance has been

made possible by first-class organisation of the flow of materials and by the completion of two more slips, making four in all, to which a dry dock for ships of up to 12,000 tons will be added under the 3rd Five Year Plan.

The Mathias Thesen Shipyard is somewhat smaller and less favourably situated that the Warnow shipyard, and is also less complete; but there too building is progressing apace. Until now this yard has built only a series of 1,300-ton cargo-passenger boats for service on the great rivers of the USSR, where they have stood up perfectly, I was told, to temperatures of — 50° C on the Yenisei. These are beautifully finished boats and really luxurious.

It will concentrate mainly on passenger ships, and has recently started on a series of liners for service between Leningrad and London under the Soviet flag. These ships, which are specially strengthened for service in waters where ice may be met, will have a displacement of almost 5,500 tons and a speed of 18 knots. They will carry 343 passengers and about 300 tons of cargo. Eleven of them are to be completed under the 2nd Five Year Plan, ie. by 1960, and the first of them should be seen in the Thames before long.

What impressed me most of all, however, about these shipyards was the exceptionally good provision made for the accomodation and training of their numerous apprentices and perhaps even more, the excellent housing provided for their workers. I doubt whether the latter is equalled anywhere in the world.

In one respect only I could draw a distinction between them, and that is in respect of the palatial club which has just been built by the management of the Mathias Thesen shipyard, with the bonus of 100,000 marks which the yard won last year in recognition of the fact that it had three times secured the Red Banner for being the "Best Shipyard".

But shipyard workers in most countries would be more than content with the Warnow shipyard's club — for all its "inferiority".

SOCIALIST GAINS IN E. GERMANY

By George Lohr, Berlin

In a recent speech that also dealt with German reunification, Nikita Khrushchev observed that the workers of the German Democratic Republic certainly would not want to give up their socialist gains.

Some American columnists, commenting on the Khrushchev speech, sneeringly put the word "gains" in quotes. But quotes or no, the gains are there for all to see, and considering the special difficulties of building socialism in one part of a divided nation, they are quite remarkable. I have traveled about this country a lot during the past months, once together with a group of conservative western journalists, and I would like to share with you a few of the impressions jotted down in my notebook.

As an example, there is the resort hotel I visited, located on top of a sloping hill in Thuringia. Owned and run by the trade unions, its modern facilities and lay-out could well hold their own with any middle-class vacation spot in the United States. The rooms — never more than two occupants — are well appointed and many of them have private balconies for sun bathing.

There is a T-V room, smoking room, reading room, music room, pool room, a bar and a library with 1,400 volumes. The heavy Marxist stuff was taken out of circulation last summer on the theory that workers should relax during their vacation and not spend their time studying.

But lest someone raise the cry that this is "regimentation", let me hasten to add that any vacationer whose heart is set on reading Engels' "Anti-Duehring" or Lenin's collected works can of course get them as well, by making a special request.

The dining room has small tables, white table cloths, all spotlessly clean, and the printed menu offers, besides soups and desserts, the choice of twelve main dishes. We happened to walk in while guests were having their afternoon coffee and cakes, with a live band providing music. Most of the workers with whom we passed the time of day were from the metal and electrical industry, but a fair number were white collar and professional.

Well, what's the tab for all this when the two weeks are up? The drinks are everybody's own affair, and so is coffee which is still a very expensive item here. But just about everything else, room and board and so forth, is included in the ridiculously low fee of 30 marks for the whole period. For an average worker, that's about two day's pay.

But there is something else I learned. Every worker here gets not only two weeks paid vacation, but also an additional 30 marks as spending money. In other words, the extra vacation pay covers the hotel bill.

For the workers, that is. Evidently the 30 marks does not begin to cover the real cost. Just to house and feed the vacationer costs 85 marks, not to speak of the original investment, upkeep and all that. The difference is paid for by the unions and the state. This particular hotel is one of hundreds of similar places where each year some 1,100,000 workers spend their vacation.

. . . Now let's have a look at another socialist gain, namely the care of the sick, and in this particular case those afflicted with TB.

A group of us went to visit the largest TB sanatarium in the country which, when completely finished, will take care of 1,075 patients. We were shown around by the head of the institution, Professor Adolf Tegtmeyer, who is not only a top TB specialist but in this case also doubled as an architect. He wanted it built just right, with maximum comfort for the patients and making possible the highest efficiency for the staff, so he got himself a young architect, a former patient, to draw the blue-prints together with him.

. . . As it turned out, there were many problems in construction, because of shortage of material. For instance, he could not get pipes for plumbing and sewage. But where there is a will, there is a way. He remembered that in nearby Buchenwald, the former concentration camp, the pipes had been left in the ground when the rest of the place was demolished at war's end. A group of young volunteers was organised, they went over to Buchenwald with tools and trucks, and now these pipes serve an institution dedicated to life, not death.

The sanatarium is built in various self-sufficient units — own kitchens,

X-ray rooms and so forth — to eliminate noise, congestion and long trips for the patients. Everything moves on wheels, from laundry baskets to food. There are separate elevators for patients, for food, for laundry and for staff. Operating rooms are air-conditioned, and so are the rooms of post-operation patients, to ensure even temperature.

The rooms, two occupants only, are gaily decorated and full of flowers, and many of them have balconies that look out over a wide valley of meadows and patches of forest. Every room has a telephone, and phone calls to and from relatives and friends are encouraged. There is also a smoking room in every unit, for a few permitted puffs after meals.

A separate building houses a large cafe, tastefully decorated, where convalescent patients spend time and also receive visitors. Upstairs is a movie, seating 400 people. The general public from surrounding towns is also encouraged to visit this House of Culture, so as to make it possible for the patients to mingle freely and make new friends.

A great deal is done in the sanatarium to provide vocational retraining for easy occupations, such as translating or white collar jobs.

And who pays for all this? Social security. The patient doesn't pay a penny. But in addition to that, his family is also taken care of. The patient gets full sickness insurance as long as there is a chance of work rehabilitation. Sickness insurance amounts to 90 per cent of the wage for the first six weeks, and 50 per cent thereafter. If the family can't live on that, extra provision is made. If the doctors establish that the patient can never go back to work, he gets a permanent invalid pension.

A patient cannot be fired from his job while he is in the sanatarium, and management is obliged by law to give him an easy job when he returns to work. He also gets preferred status on the waiting list for a new apartment.

. . . There are still many problems and the German Democratic Republic is not immune from the world-wide problem of farm families leaving the land and preferring the comforts of city life. On the other hand, the government very much encourages farm cooperatives and they are given much help and assistance.

While driving along the big highway, we came upon a group of tots playing in a grove a few dozen feet off the road. We stopped and talked with the two young women who supervised the little ones. They were from a neighbouring village, all individual peasants, where a nursery kindergarten had been established. The mothers bring the kids in the morning at six and pick them up when their chores are done in the evening. The children are fed, washed, medically cared for, they have games, they are taken for walks and the fee is infinitesimal.

We spent an afternoon in a village where all but three peasants had joined the co-op. There is something different about such a village, with its large modern buildings, lots of farm machinery around, people working in groups, and everything very clean.

This particular co-op has about 700 acres of land, 195 head of cattle, 450 pigs, 320 sheep and 850 chickens. The co-op has 62 members and they are paid in cash according to work units, as well as in substantial amounts of produce. Their income is about equal to that of the average industrial worker, and they also benefit from sick and maternity insurance and other social security measures.

There is continual building going on. The house of culture has already been in operation for some time; the rooming house for the apprentices, tiled showers and all, was just being finished and another construction brigade was building an addition to the cow shed. This particular brigade consisted of three men of which the youngest was just past 70. When I talked to them over a glass of beer, they were all full of pride over the changes the co-op had brought to their village.

Another trip took us to a huge cokery, just recently constructed. The German Democratic Republic has no hard coal mines and so a process has been developed to turn briquettes into coal good enough to use in low shaft blast furnaces.

About 2,500 are employed there, 30 per cent of them women. Workers get free milk, free work clothes including warm underwear and shoes and also free laundry. A big bath house has been constructed, along with the locker rooms. The worker comes off shift, strips to the skin and puts his work clothes on a contraption that pulls them 50 feet up to the ceiling where they air until next day. Then he steps under the shower or stretches in a tub, and after that he can bask in ultra violet rays or perspire in some electric heat chamber arrangement.

He can eat in the works canteen where for 70 pfennigs, the earnings of about 20 minutes work, he can get his choice of three dishes, each with five ounces of meat. He can also take the bus down the street to the house of culture which has been built by management but which is open to every citizen of the community. The food is good — we ate there — and there is also a nice bar.

(Abridged from "New World Review", New York, March 1958)

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

An insight into the way that West German judges' minds often work was given at the end of May in a case heard by the Lueneburg District Court. The court sentenced 56-year old Berthold Kronmueller to two years imprisonment for "playing a leading role in an anti-constitutional underground organisation". If you should think that Herr Kronmueller was active in a nazi Werewolf movement, you are sadly mistaken. The "underground organisation" was the Communist Party of Germany, which was banned in West Germany two years ago. The two year sentence was nothing out of the ordinary: sentences like this are passed in West Germany almost every day.

What was a little out of the ordinary was the concluding speech of the prosecuting attorney, Dr. von Luecken. He said: "The crime of the accused is made all the more serious by the fact that he has previously twice been sentenced to hard labour for high treason, but that these sentences have not made him mend his ways."

The statement was quite correct. In 1933, veteran Communist Kronmueller was sentenced to two years hard labour by a nazi court because of his anti-nazi activity. In 1940 he was sentenced to five years hard labour by a nazi court because of his anti-nazi activity. And today these sentences are "taken into consideration against him" in a court of the oh-so-democratic West German Republic.

Neo-Nazi

Another interesting example of the neo-nazi line of thought so prevalent in leading West German circles these days was given by the "Rheinische Post", leading Christian Democratic newspaper in North Rhine Westphalia.

On May 22nd this newspaper called for the jailing of all those in West Germany who have appealed for industrial action against the arming of the Wehrmacht with atomic weapons. In the past few months leading scientists and trade unionists in West Germany have issued manifestos and appeals calling for all forms of resistance against nuclear weapons, including the calling of a general strike. The Christian Democratic newspaper commented:

"There can be no doubt that such appeals constitute 'illegal pressure on Parliament', and it passes understanding why the competent authorities do not take action under Paragraph 105 of the Criminal Code. Anybody who calls for resistance or for strikes against decisions legally taken by the Federal Parliament makes himself guilty of illegal pressure on Parliament, and must be punished."

Paragraph 105 of the Criminal Code lays down a minimum sentence of five years hard labour for persons exerting "illegal pressure on Parliament". The paragraph has never been applied in modern German history.

Ike's Golf

West German newspaper editors will soon be in danger of going to prison for two years if they dare to make critical remarks about the private affairs of any foreign head of state, or of members of his family.

Chancellor Adenauer's government has approved a bill to this effect which they will try to rush through parliament in the next few weeks.

This astonishing new bill, which has no precedent in civilised countries in modern times, has met with strong opposition in most West German newspapers, which point out that under the new provisions they would be prevented from commenting, for example, on President Eisenhower's critical state of health, on his predilection for golf, or on the fact that Mamie Eisenhower used a government plane to go to Elizabeth Arden's "Health Ranch" for a beauty treatment.

In addition, the new bill, if it becomes law, could prevent any comment on shady financial operations by Latin Amerian dictators, or criticism of the acts of such "Christian gentlemen" as General Franco.

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A particularly objectionable aspect of the new draft law is that it specifically provides that the truth of the charges made will not constitute any defence.

The draft law has been nick-named the "Lex Soraya", since it is allegedly directed against the publication recently in West German magazines of very intimate details of the love life of Ex-Queen Soraya of Iran. Responsible newspapermen in West Germany admit that some of the gynaecological details in this case have not been very appetising, but they fear that the new law will only be the first step in a general muzzling of the press. In addition, they suspect that Chancellor Adenauer, after railroading the bill through parliament, will then approach various foreign states and request them to pass similar legislation, which would prevent the publication in other countries of similarly critical articles about leading figures in West Germany.

It is interesting to note that while Adenauer is ready to use his whole influence to prevent any criticism of foreign kings and dictators, he has taken no action at all to stop the steady flood of militarist and neo-nazi literature which floods from the West German presses. Under the new press law, glorification of Hitler will be no crime: denigration of General Franco will cost two years in jail.

Street Names

Many readers will remember the name of Carl von Ossietzky, famed antifascist publicist who was murdered by the nazis in 1937. One year earlier, while he was detained in a nazi concentration camp, Ossietzky was honoured by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

When the nazis were vanquished in 1945, many towns in East and West Germany honoured Ossietzky's memory by naming streets in his memory. But now the nazis are creeping (or marching) back into power in West Germany, and the name annoys them. The town council of Goettingen has therefore decided to rename Ossietzky Street. The new name of the street will be "General Joachim Hans von Ziethen Strasse". The general with the nice long name was one of Friedrich the Great's generals in his wars of conquest. The only question open is why they did not go the whole hog and call it "Adolf Hitler Strasse".

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